

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 ORM-02 DHA-02 AID-05 /088 W

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R 221018Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7156

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 1431

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR LA TH

SUBJECT: LAOS AGREES TO TALKS WITH THAILAND

SUMMARY: LAO OFFICIAL CONVEYS WORD THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS NOW READY TO HOLD TALKS WITH THAILAND ABOUT PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTRE KHUKRIT PRAMOT MET JAN 21 WITH LAO DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM OUNHEUANE PHOUNSAVATH, PRESENTLY IN BANGKOK ACCOMPANYING A 35-MEMBER DANCE TROUPE FROM SAM NEUA APPEARING IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN MUSIC AND DRAMATIC ARTS FESTIVAL HERE. AFTER THE MEETING KHUKRIT ANNOUNCED THAT LAOS IS NOW WILLING TO HOLD TALKS WITH THAILAND. AS BEST WE CAN UNDERSTAND, THESE WOULD OCCUR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A MINISTERIAL-LEVEL BORDER COMMITTEE, TO MEET IN EITHER BANGKOK OR VIENTIANE. OUNHEUANE APPARENTLY TRANSMITTED PDRL PRIME MINISTER KAYSONE PHOMVIHAN'S WISHES AND EXPECTATION THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL OVERCOME THEIR PROBLEMS, TO WHICH KHUKRIT ASKED HIM TO CONVEY A SIMILAR MESSAGE TO KAYSONE IN REPLY AND EXPRESSED HIS

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WISH TO VISIT VIENTIANE AFTER THE THAI ELECTIONS.

2. FOLLOWING A MEETING BETWEEN OUNHEUANE AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN JAN 22, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED THAT THE COMMITTEE MEETING WILL PROBABLY BE HELD IN FEBRUARY AND SHOULD DISCUSS SUCH SUBJECTS AS TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS TO LAOS THROUGH THAILAND, SMUGGLING, ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS, AND THE QUESTION OF REGULAR MEETINGS. CHATCHAI REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF THE REFUGEE AND SMUGGLING PROBLEMS WERE RESOLVED, THE RTG WOULD BE WILLING TO REOPEN THE BORDER AT ALL POINTS.

3. COMMENT: THAI OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR SOME TIME THAT IF THEY COULD JUST SIT DOWN WITH THE LAO AND TALK, THE GOVERNMENTS COULD RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT THAT THINGS WILL BE SETTLED SO EASILY, CONSIDERING THE PRESENT STATE OF OHAI-LAO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, THE LAO HAVE NOW MADE A GESTURE TOWARD NORMALIZATION WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY PLEASES THE THAI. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE COMMITTEE MENTIONED WILL BE A REPLACEMENT FOR THE THAI-LAO JOINT COMMITTEE, WHICH LAST MET IN JANUARY 1975. MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGKO01431
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760025-0385
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760133/aaaabcmx.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAOS AGREES TO TALKS WITH THAILAND SUMMARY: LAO OFFICIAL CONVEYS WORD THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, LA, TH, (KHUKRIT PRAMOT), (OUNHEUANE PHOUNSAVATH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006